

Statewide Fisheries Management Plan: Part II

Fisheries Management Direction for Drainages and Waterbodies

Introduction to Part II of the Plan

Part II of the Plan provides specific fisheries management direction for 40 drainages in the state of Montana (see statewide map on page 73). Each drainage plan includes a drainage map, a narrative section, and a management direction table. The narrative section provides an overview of conditions in the drainage and consists of four parts: Physical Description, Fisheries Management, Habitat, and Fishing Access. The table provides management direction and habitat needs for individual species or groups of species on a waterbody basis in each drainage. Descriptions of the terms used in each column of the tables are as follows:

Water: Waters are listed beginning at the upstream end of the drainage and proceeding downstream. Mainstem waters are listed first, followed by tributaries and lakes off the mainstem.

Species: Not all species in the waterbody are listed in the table. Only those for which specific management direction has been established are listed. This list typically includes most principal game species, important forage species, and Species of Concern.

Origin: Three types of origin are indicated. More than one type may apply in any given situation:

- A. **Hatchery.** Fish are stocked directly from a state, federal or private hatchery as fry, fingerlings or catchables (> 8 inches for trout). Applied primarily to lakes and ponds where natural reproduction is lacking or unable to meet angler demands. Includes eggs that were produced from wild brood, but hatched and raised in a hatchery prior to stocking.
- B. **Wild.** Fish are spawned and reared in their natural habitat. This applies to almost all stream and river fisheries in the state, as well as to some lakes and ponds where natural reproduction is capable of meeting angler needs. Also applies to situations where natural reproduction is assisted through the use of habitat enhancements to improve spawning beds or gravels.
- C. **Transfer.** Fish are wild, but transferred from one waterbody to another. Used primarily in eastern Montana to “seed” barren lakes which have suffered from drought or winterkill, or to provide forage for game species in receiving waters.

Management Type: Eight management types are identified. More than one type may apply in any given situation:

- A. **Put and Take.** A management approach using stocking of catchable size (larger than 8 inches) hatchery rainbow trout to provide high consumptive catch rates. Applied to lakes, ponds, and reservoirs and certain streams or stream reaches with good access and

moderate to high fishing pressure. Used where long-term survival and growth is limited due to habitat characteristics or high harvest rates.

- B. **Put, Grow and Take.** A management approach using hatchery fry or fingerlings to provide angling opportunities on small lakes, ponds, and reservoirs and certain streams or stream reaches. Used where long-term survival and growth is limited due to habitat characteristics or high harvest rates.
- C. **Special regulations.** A management approach that relies on the natural production potential of a water body to provide angling opportunity for native fish or naturalized populations of introduced fish. Regulation exceptions to District Standard regulations are in place to protect or manipulate population levels or sizes in response to angler desires or pressure.
- D. **Quality.** A management approach that changes, by regulation, the size and/or numbers of fish which may be harvested in order to provide increased catch rates for larger fish which are considered quality or trophy size. This type of management may be applied to water areas or to specific species.
- E. **Conservation.** A management approach that may or may not allow angling and harvest in order to protect and rebuild the viability of a native fish population. This type is used in situations where management efforts (fishing regulations, habitat enhancements, land acquisitions, flow leases, etc) are actively underway or contemplated to protect and rebuild populations. This type may also be applied to native non-game species or species groups.
- F. **Family Fishing Water.** A management approach applied to a water body emphasizing family-oriented fishing opportunities typically with simplified rules including no size or tackle restrictions. Includes waters classified as Children's Fishing Waters in Fishing Regulations Booklet.
- G. **Suppression.** A management approach that relies on one or more means to reduce or eliminate the presence of a species. The means may include liberal angler harvest limits, physical removal or chemical removal. Applied to situations where the species being suppressed is in conflict with other managed species in that waterbody.
- H. **General.** A general management approach applied to waters which do not fit the designations above and are often considered harvest fisheries (in the case of game species). Fishing is managed through natural production and no special regulations are applied. Can apply to either native or introduced species.

Management Direction: Two terms are frequently used:

- A. **Recreational fishery.** This refers to a fishery with enough angler interest to generate management emphasis or effort. Recreational fisheries include situations with a full spectrum of harvest, ranging from waters where low levels of harvest occur (large stream

trout fisheries) to situations where high harvest for consumption often occurs (kokanee fisheries, lakes with yellow perch or stocked trout).

Quality fishery. Refers to a fishery where the species excels in terms of either catch rates, large sizes, numbers of fish or fish in good condition.